



CITY OF SUNNYVALE PARKS DIVISION



INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN



PARK TREE MAINTENANCE/REMOVALS



The Parks Division recognizes the vital role that trees play in our landscapes. Trees provide us with various colors, shapes and textures—with natural grace and beauty. They camouflage unsightly scenes and break the monotony of man-made materials such as concrete and asphalt. They help to keep our air supply fresh by producing oxygen and absorbing the carbon dioxide we, our industries and automobiles produce. Their leaves trap and filter dust and pollen. Trees act as natural air conditioners, providing shade in the summer and insulation during winter months. Trees slow strong winds, function as effective sound barriers, provide food and shelter for wildlife, afford us shade and privacy, and increase surrounding property values.

Park staff perform semi-annual evaluations of all park trees. In this manner, the inventory of trees throughout the park system is continually updated, and self-imposed Division goals ensure that the total number of trees throughout the park system is not reduced.

These same evaluations also track changes in the condition of individual trees. Quality standards have been established relative to tree health, safety, aesthetics and utility, and the evaluation process serves to identify problems ranging from disease to major structural damage to low limbs over pedestrian walkways. Safety hazards are abated within 48 hours, and all other noted problems are assigned completion deadlines based on the nature of the work.

Unfortunately, the removal of mature trees is sometimes warranted. There are a number of legitimate reasons for removing mature trees, ranging from contagious disease to major structural damage, but related decisions always include a review of the tree's condition, age, life expectancy, species and location. This information is then weighed against issues of safety, liability, cost-effectiveness and long-term park objectives.

Every action taken by the Parks Division regarding tree maintenance, whether that be the staking of a sapling, the realignment of a sidewalk conflicting with tree roots, or the removal of a mature specimen, originates from a sincere desire to improve the overall urban forest and is planned by qualified personnel.